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Filed : May 26, 1998

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

- 1-3. (Canceled).
4. (Currently Amended) A purified and isolated protein encoded by a gene sequence ~~selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 103 through SEQ ID NO: 154.~~
5. (Currently Amended) A purified and isolated protein having an amino acid sequence ~~selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:155 through SEQ ID NO:206.~~
- 6-10. (Canceled).
11. (Original) A method of detecting antibodies against HCV, said method comprising:
- (a) contacting a biological sample with at least one protein of claim 5 to form an immune complex with the antibodies; and
 - (b) detecting the presence of the immune complex.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, saliva or lymphocytes or other mononuclear cells.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the ~~recombinant~~ protein is bound to a solid support.
14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the immune complex is detected using a labeled antibody.
15. (Currently Amended) A hepatitis C virus kit comprising: at least one protein comprising an amino acid ~~sequence selected from the group consisting of: SEQ ID NO:52 through SEQ ID NO: 102 and SEQ ID NO:155 through SEQ ID NO:206.~~
16. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising at least one ~~recombinant~~ protein of claim 5 and an excipient, diluent or carrier.
- 17-18. (Canceled).
19. (Currently Amended) An immunogenic composition for inducing an immune response in vaccine for immunizing a mammal against hepatitis C ~~infection virus~~, comprising at least one protein according to claim 5 in a pharmacologically acceptable carrier.
- 20-31. (Canceled)
32. (Currently Amended) An isolated genotype-specific peptide having an amino acid ~~sequences~~ sequence of at least 8 amino acids deduced from a genotype-specific amino acid

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domains located in ~~SEQ ID NO: 155 through SEQ ID NO:206, or in consensus sequences shown in Figures 7A-K~~ wherein genotype-specific is defined as belonging to a single genotype of HCV with reference to Figure 7J.

33. (Original) A method of detecting antibodies specific for a single genotype of HCV, said method comprising:

- (a) contacting a biological sample with at least one peptide of claim 32 to form an immune complex with the antibodies, and
- (b) detecting the presence of the immune complex.

34. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, saliva or lymphocytes or other mononuclear cells.

35. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein said peptide is bound to a solid support.

36. (Original) The method of claim 33, wherein the immune complex is detected using a labelled antibody or antigen.

37. (Currently Amended) A kit for use in detecting antibodies specific for a single genotype of HCV, said kit comprising: at least one ~~peptide selected from the~~ genotype-specific ~~peptides~~ peptide of claim 32.

38. (Currently Amended) An isolated universally conserved peptide having an amino acid ~~sequences~~ sequence of at least 8 amino acids deduced from universally conserved amino acid domains found in ~~SEQ ID NO:155 through SEQ ID NO:206, or in consensus sequences shown in Figures 7A-K~~ wherein universally conserved is defined as belonging to all genotypes of HCV with reference to Figure 7J.

39. (Original) A method of detecting antibodies against all genotypes of HCV, said method comprising:

- (a) contacting a biological sample with at least one peptide of claim 38 to form an immune complex with the antibodies, and
- (b) detecting the presence of the immune complex.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein the biological sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, saliva or lymphocytes or other mononuclear cells.

41. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein said peptide is bound to a solid support.

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42. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein the immune complex is detected using a labelled antibody or antigen.

43. (Original) A composition comprising at least one peptide of claim 32 and an excipient, diluent or carrier.

44. (Original) A composition comprising at least one peptide of claim 38 and an excipient, diluent or carrier.

45. (Canceled).

46. (Currently Amended) An immunogenic composition for inducing an immune response in vaccine for immunizing a mammal against hepatitis C ~~infection~~ virus, comprising at least one peptide according to claims 32 or 38 in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

47-59. (Canceled).